

Rappahannock Astronomy Club

Minutes, September 16, 2020, Online Meeting

In attendance:

Jim Browder
Scott Busby
Bart & Linda Billard
Don Clark
Glenn Faini

Glenn Holliday
Jerry Hubbell
Guest: Don Machholz
Rolando Pancotti
Matt Scott

The meeting began at 7:00 p.m. Ten members and a guest were present.

Old Business

- **Treasurer's Report**—Matt Scott reported an expenditure of \$79.38 to reimburse Don Clark for the renewal of web hosting. (He said Don had not cashed the check yet.) There was an addition of \$47.50 for two dues payments, one including AL dues. The membership total is now 27 paid (33 total members).
- **Vice President's Event Report**—Glenn Faini said the August and September star parties were cancelled because of the weather, but he noted the forecast for this month turned out to be inaccurate, and some viewing might have been possible.
- **StarGazer Report**—Linda Billard had little to report for the next newsletter. Glenn F. brought up a recent surprise presentation to her of an award "For Outstanding Contributions and Dedication to the Rappahannock Astronomy Club StarGazer Newsletter." Glenn mentioned that Scott Busby took a photo of the presentation that will be posted on the club website. He also talked about a video that Scott made. He said the video file was too large to transfer easily, and would probably need editing to make something suitable to consider posting.
- **MSRO Status**—Jerry Hubbell said recently there had been a series of failures affecting all three MSRO stations. Two of the station computers failed, as did the mount for station 2. The filter wheel on station 1 was a thin version that caused problems with sticking. Jerry bought a replacement and said he would be able to put the thinner filter wheel on station 3. Then all the stations would be able to use filters. In addition, Jerry said the Moonlight focuser on station 1 failed because of a bearing problem. He was able to send it in for an upgrade that included larger bearings to improve reliability. The LX200 mount failure on station 2 was the same problem we had early on with an LX200 mount that was in station 1, and he said they planned using the same modification with a PMC-EIGHT and stepper motors to get it working again. Someone asked about using MSRO for virtual star parties, and Jerry mentioned the Tuesday evening Explore Scientific Global Star Party series on YouTube, which included MSRO participation. He showed an image of the Dumbbell Nebula (M27) taken during the event the night before the meeting. Glenn H. said a group of people requested support for an International Observe the Moon Night event. All he was able to offer was a remote event, but they indicated they preferred to try to get in-person support. Jerry asked Jim Browder what the Richmond club was doing for outreach. Jim said they don't share telescopes, but they did hold one meteor shower event. He also said the number of members participating in meetings had been stable but a somewhat different mix of people were participating in the Zoom meetings.

We discussed continuing to offer Zoom participation once meeting in person was again possible. There was some uncertainty in the opinions. Linda mentioned the quilting guild she belongs to discovered they were able to get guest speakers they otherwise would not be able to afford because of travel and lodging expenses. She suggested Jerry might be able to think of some equivalent speaker possibilities for RAC presentations. He said he could think of some.

New Business

- Next Meeting—Glenn F. mentioned the next meeting was for officer nominations. He said he would be sending out a message to members encouraging them to consider becoming an officer.

Next Meeting

The next meeting is on Wednesday, October 21, 2020. It is currently planned as an online Zoom meeting.